Financial security to older persons

†2228. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of aged persons in the country;

(b) whether Government have formulated any policy to provide financial security to older persons;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the efforts being made by Government for implementing the said policy; and

(e) the extent of improvement experienced in the condition of older persons consequent upon the efforts made by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) As per the census 2001, the population of persons aged 60+ years and above is 7,66,22,321.

(b) to (d) The Government has adopted National Policy on Older Persons, which *interalia* addresses issues relating to the financial security of the senior citizens. Further, the Central Government has substantially enhanced the additional Central Assistance to the States/Union Territories with effect from 1.4.2006 for payment of Old Age Pension to the destitute old from Rs. 75/- to Rs. 200/- per month per person with a request to the States to make matching contributions. The Ministry periodically reviews the implementation of the policy through the meetings of the Inter-Ministerial Committee and National Council on Older Persons.

(e) No such study has been conducted.

Schemes for eradication of untouchability

†2229. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the word 'Dalit' is constitutional;

(b) the view of the Ministry thereon;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether the Ministry propose to bring any independent programme for so-called untouchable Schedule Castes; and

(d) the details of Government's schemes for rooting out untouchability?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The term, 'Dalit' has not been enumerated in the Constitution of India. It is, however, used in common parlance.

(c) and (d) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are provided central assistance for strengthening of the enforcement and judicial machinery, awareness generation, incentive for inter-caste marriages, relief and rehabilitation of the affected persons. Further, four National Awards have been instituted so that NGOs/Individuals doing outstanding fieldwork can be honoured.

Institutes for neglected and destitute children in Madhya Pradesh

†2230. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite Madhya Pradesh being a large State, consisting of 48 districts, there are only 26 institutes for destitute, neglected and delinquent children in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether the number of these institutes could be increased to 48 from 26, so that the children could be taken care of as per rules; and

(c) whether Government propose to increase the number of such institutes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (c) The State Government of Madhya Pradesh have proposed to construct additional 8 homes under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.